

life group study guide

RESPECT AND CONTENTMENT

October 21, 2012



RESPECT AND CONTENTMENT 1 TIMOTHY 6:1-10

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Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, wrote, *"Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it costs you all you have, get understanding,"* Living a righteous life requires attaining wisdom and discernment to be able to distinguish right from wrong and the good from the best. Though becoming wise involves sacrifice and commitment to an often difficult and narrow path, it leads to a worthwhile life full of blessings, peace, and prosperity.

In the Word of God, the Lord discusses the steps we must take in order to become wise. The first step necessary is learning to fear the Lord. Proverbs 1:7 states that the *"Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."* Fearing God is to hate what He hates and love what He loves. Titus 2:11-12 says that the grace of God . . . *"Teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present*

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Contentment is that inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of our outward circumstances. Contentment with the necessities of life and the attitude of "godliness" is great gain! "Godliness with contentment" is a spiritual blessing in Christ that cannot be lost or stolen.

Discontentment undermines God's promise to *"provide all that we need"* (Phil. 4:19) and to *"satisfy the desires of every living thing"* (Ps.145:16). Hebrews 13:5 says, *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'* The Lord gives us this command so that we will devote our time and energy to a life of service with eternal rewards rather than a life of temporary pleasure with fleeting satisfaction. God does not want us to be so consumed with working to earn money, that we are reduced to just "making a living" instead of "living a life."

Paul wisely instructs Timothy to *"pursue righteousness, godliness, and love . . ."* instead of money, for he states that *"we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it"* (1 Timothy 6:11, 7). Wealth and hoarded possessions only have value in this life. King Solomon, once the wealthiest man in the world, wrote, *"I amassed silver and gold for myself . . . I denied nothing my eyes desired . . . Yet when I surveyed . . . what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless"* Ecclesiastes 2: 8,11). In the end he concluded that the only worthwhile purpose under heaven was to *"fear God and keep His commandments"* (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

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Those who strive to become wealthy by being spiritual open themselves up to all sorts of problems. They will distort and deny the truths of the faith (verses 3-5, 9-10) Living for the goal of wealth in this world will make us destitute in the next. (Lazarus & the rich man) Instead of improving the quality of their lives here and now, they tumble into the pit of discontent and despair. (verses 9-10) Embracing

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What is biblical stewardship? To discover what the Bible says about stewardship, we start with the very first verse: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). As the Creator, God has absolute rights of ownership over all things. If we miss starting here, nothing else in our lives will ever line up. Nothing else in the Bible, including the doctrine of stewardship, will make any sense or have any true relevance if we miss the fact that God is the Creator and has full rights of ownership.

Stewardship defines our practical obedience in the administration of everything under our control, everything entrusted to us. It is the consecration of one's self and possessions to God's service. Stewardship acknowledges in practice that we do not have the right of control over ourselves or our property—God has that control. It means as stewards of God we are managers of that which belongs to God, and we are under His constant authority as we administer His affairs. Faithful stewardship means that we fully acknowledge we are not our own but belong to Christ, the Lord, who gave Himself for us. (Genesis 1:1; 1 Corinthians 3:19; Matthew 28: 19-20; Galatians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 3:2)

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Contentment is that inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of our outward circumstances. Contentment with the necessities of life and the attitude of "godliness" is great gain! "Godliness with contentment" is a spiritual blessing in Christ that cannot be lost or stolen.

Discontentment undermines God's promise to *"provide all that we need"* (Phil. 4:19) and to *"satisfy the desires of every living thing"* (Ps.145:16). Hebrews 13:5 says, *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'* The Lord gives us this command so that we will devote our time and energy to a life of service with eternal rewards rather than a life of temporary pleasure with fleeting satisfaction. God does not want us to be so consumed with working to earn money, that we are reduced to just *"making a living"* instead of *"living a life."*

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Contentment is that inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of our outward circumstances. Contentment with the necessities of life and the attitude of "godliness" is great gain! "Godliness with contentment" is a spiritual blessing in Christ that cannot be lost or stolen.

Discontentment undermines God's promise to *"provide all that we need"* (Phil. 4:19) and to *"satisfy the desires of every living thing"* (Ps.145:16). Hebrews 13:5 says, *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'* The Lord gives us this command so that we will devote our time and energy to a life of service with eternal rewards rather than a life of temporary pleasure with fleeting satisfaction. God does not want us to be so consumed with working to earn money, that we are reduced to just "making a living" instead of "living a life."

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age." The fear of God involves recognition that you are accountable to a just and holy God for your every thought, word, and action.

Contentment is that inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of our outward circumstances. Contentment with the necessities of life and the attitude of "godliness" is great gain! "Godliness with contentment" is a spiritual blessing in Christ that cannot be lost or stolen.

Discontentment undermines God's promise to *"provide all that we need"* (Phil. 4:19) and to *"satisfy the desires of every living thing"* (Ps.145:16). Hebrews 13:5 says, *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'* The Lord gives us this command so that we will devote our time and energy to a life of service with eternal rewards rather than a life of temporary pleasure with fleeting satisfaction. God does not want us to be so consumed with working to earn money, that we are reduced to just "making a living" instead of "living a life."

Paul wisely instructs Timothy to *"pursue righteousness, godliness, and love . . ."* instead of money, for he states that *"we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it"* (1 Timothy 6:11, 7). Wealth and hoarded possessions only have value in this life. King Solomon, once the wealthiest man in the world, wrote, *"I amassed silver and gold for myself . . . I denied nothing my eyes desired . . . Yet when I surveyed . . . what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless"* Ecclesiastes 2: 8,11). In the end he concluded that the only worthwhile purpose under heaven was to *"fear God and keep His commandments"* (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Is it possible to be contented in today's world? Yes, but only by abandoning your pursuit of whatever you think will make you content. In Philippians 4, Paul gives us his secret of contentment...*being satisfied in 'whatever' circumstances he is in. Whether plenty or nothing.* In Matthew 6:19, Jesus commands us to *"not store up for yourselves treasures on earth"*. What part of that command do we not understand? All of mankind is at war with a fallen world. And all of mankind is trying to undo the curse of a fallen world with the pursuit of worldly pleasures.

Philippians 4:11 – *"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:"* Ecclesiastes 5:10 – *"He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity"*

A simple-living Quaker was watching his new wealthy neighbor move into his new home. The Quaker said to him, "Neighbor if ever thou dost need anything, come to see me, and I will tell thee how to get along without it."

"Man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can afford to do without." Henry David Thoreau

To properly harness the power of money, Paul offers believers some godly financial advice. One last time Paul warns the Ephesian church about the false teachers that were plaguing them. They taught that godliness is a means of financial gain. (1 Timothy 6:3-10) We know that those who adhere to biblical standards often enjoy tangible benefits and concrete blessings. Yet there is not one place in the Bible that guarantees financial blessings to the godly. (2 Corinthians 11:27)

Those who strive to become wealthy by being spiritual open themselves up to all sorts of problems. They will distort and deny the truths of the faith (verses 3-5, 9-10) Living for the goal of wealth in this world will make us destitute in the next. (Lazarus & the rich man) Instead of improving the quality of their lives here and now, they tumble into the pit of discontent and despair. (verses 9-10) Embracing

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materialism promotes discontent. The truth is that those who are sincerely following God will enjoy total contentment that comes from having their basic needs and primary desire met.

Q. What are some practical ways to apply Paul's teaching in the workplace, especially where the circumstances are sometimes challenging?

Q. Can you think of any time in the Bible where a person is commended for pursuing money?

Q. Who is commended for using money well? (Mark 13:41-44; Luke 16:1-13)

Q. What about where a person is condemned for loving money too much? (Matthew 19:16-26, 2 Kings 5:20-27)

Q. How does the Bible say we should use money? What is its purpose? (Luke 16:9)

Q. What should our attitude be towards money? (Proverbs 23:4; Matthew 6:25-34). Is this your attitude towards money?

Q. Looking at verse 8, is there any situation in life where it might be OK to be discontent?

Q. What kind of sins spring from a love of money?

Q. What does the Bible say about greed? (Luke 12:15; Matthew 6:19-24)

Q. What does the Bible say about Materialism? (Mark 4:19; Luke 16:13; Ecclesiastes 5:10; 12:13)

Q. What does the Bible say about Selfishness? (Philippians 2:3-4; Galatians 5:20; James 3:6; Psalms 19:21-22; Proverbs 18:1; James 4:3)

What is biblical stewardship? To discover what the Bible says about stewardship, we start with the very first verse: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). As the Creator, God has absolute rights of ownership over all things. If we miss starting here, nothing else in our lives will ever line up. Nothing else in the Bible, including the doctrine of stewardship, will make any sense or have any true relevance if we miss the fact that God is the Creator and has full rights of ownership.

Stewardship defines our practical obedience in the administration of everything under our control, everything entrusted to us. It is the consecration of one's self and possessions to God's service. Stewardship acknowledges in practice that we do not have the right of control over ourselves or our property—God has that control. It means as stewards of God we are managers of that which belongs to God, and we are under His constant authority as we administer His affairs. Faithful stewardship means that we fully acknowledge we are not our own but belong to Christ, the Lord, who gave Himself for us. (Genesis 1:1; 1 Corinthians 3:19; Matthew 28: 19-20; Galatians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 3:2)

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The ultimate question for each of us is this: Am I the lord of my life, or is Christ the Lord of my life? Stewardship expresses our total obedience to God and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.